

Message Text

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13
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /080 W
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R 021531Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7592
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SF
SUBJECT: BUTHELEZI LEAVZV NIGERIA

REF: LAGOS 12294

1. CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI, WHO LEFT NIGERIA FOR HOME ON OCTOBER 29, GAVE 45-MINUTE RADIO-TV "PRESS CONVERENCE" BROADCAST ON OCTOBER 31. PRE-RECORDED SESSION WAS CHAIRED BY NIIA DIRECTOR GENERAL AKINYEMI AND INCLUDED THREE PROMINENT NIGERIAN JOURNALISTS. QUESTIONERS EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT BUTHELEZI'S COMMITMENT TO MILITANCY AND VOICED SUSPICION OF HIS LEGITIMACY AS TRUE INDEPENDENCE LEADER. BUTHELEZI'S DISPASSIONATE, ARTICULATE
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AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSES IMPLIED THAT NIGERIANS HAD LITTLE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE REAL SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE REMAINED HOPEFUL THAT INDEPENDENCE COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT MAJOR BLOODSHED.

2. DURING THIS INTERVIEW AS IN ALL HIS APPEARANCES, BUTHELEZI PLUGGED FOR INDEPENDENT AFRICA'S UNDERSTANDING OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS' POSITION AND SOUGHT SUPPORT FOR LEADERS, LIKE HIMSELF, WHO ARE WORKING FOR CHANGE FROM WITHIN. HE MADE SAME PITCH IN SEPARATE RADIO INTERVIEW AND IN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE.

3. BUTHELEZI, WHOSE SOPHISTICATION AND EDUCATION CAME AS SURPRISE TO SOME NIGERIANS, FOLLOWED SIMILAR LINES IN PRIVATE CHATS WITH AMBASSADOR BEFORE AND AFTER HIS NIIA LECTURE. HE WARMLY RECALLED THE MEETINGS AMBASSADOR HAD WITH HIM TWO YEARS AGO AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT HOTEL AND AT RESIDENCE OF US CONGEN IN DURBAN. HE SAID ONE OF HIS MAJOR PREOCCUPATIONS WAS ATTITUDE OF YOUNG MILITANTS WHO WERE "DISILLUSIONED" WITH HIS LEADERSHIP BECAUSE HE AND OTHER HOMELAND LEADERS HAD ACHIEVED SO LITTLE IN THEIR LAST SESSION WITH VORSTER. HE SAID HE REGRETTED HE HAD HAD SO LITTLE TIME WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. THIS WAS WHY HE HAD GIVEN HIM A WRITTEN STATMENT (THE FULL TEXT OF WHICH HE READ ALOUD AT NIIA LECTURE).

4. COMMENT: WHETHER ZULU LEADER WAS ABLE CONVINCE NIGERIANS THAT HE WORTHY OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT AS A TRUE LEADER OF A SOUTH AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT IS PROBLEMATIC. CERTAINLY HIS AVERSION TO VOILENCE MET WITH SKEPTICISM ON PART MANY NIGERINAS. ON OTHER HAND, HIS REASONED ARGUMENTS PROVIDED AT LEAST A MOMENTARY BALANCE TO USUAL NIGERIAN SNAP JUDGMENT THAT FORCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, PRESS CONFERENCES, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS12490
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760409-0984
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761191/aaaadanp.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LAGOS 12294
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <13 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BUTHELEZI LEAVZV NIGERIA
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SF, (BUTHELEZI, GATSHA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006